

REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 P.M.

March 4, 2015

This Regular Meeting of Council was called to order on the above-stated date at the above-stated time after the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence by President of Council Richard Dellapenna with the following Members of Council present:

RC-1 PRESENT: KEITH SOLES, DANIEL CARR, JAMIE BREWSTER-FILOTEI, JAMES BARRY, RICHARD DELLAPENNA, DALE McCALL, FAWN WALKER-MONTGOMERY

Pastor Warren Smith from St. John's Lutheran Church led the prayer.

Also present were Mayor Michael Cherepko, City Administrator Matthew Gergely, City Solicitor J. Jason Elash and members of the Administration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Mr. Carr moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei, "To approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting of February 4, 2015."

RC-2	YEAS:	SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER-MONTGOMERY.....	7
	NAYS:	NONE.....	0

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Received the monthly Fire Report for February 2015 from Fire Chief Jeff List.
- Received the monthly report for February 2015 from the Police Chief Bryan Washowich.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Cherepko said thank you, Mr. President. He said he will be brief tonight. He said he will start off with the bad news first. He said first he would like to welcome everyone tonight and thank you for coming. He said it is nice to see everyone especially with the weather they have been having. He said he sees the Black Berets are here tonight. He said it is nice to see them here and he thinks they are going to speak a little bit tonight. He said he had a chance to stop by their fundraiser the other and it was a wonderful turnout. He said it is nice to see so many young ladies so excited and enthusiastic about getting involved with this program. He said it is something they have been taking pride here in their Administration to work with groups, especially groups focused on the youth. He said they look forward to working with this group for many years to come. He said speaking of Mother Nature, that takes him into the bad news. He said about two and a half or three hours ago, Mother Nature wiped out their Marina. He said the docks were out, except for the long one that runs parallel to the shore. He said the other ones were all taken out. He said they did lose just about all the posts. He said the ice jamb broke while they were down there looking at it, they knew it was in trouble. He said it broke and wiped out every post. He said there are about 70 – 80 posts. He said those posts cost upwards of \$4,000 per post to install. He said that would be about \$300,000 to \$400,000 just in posts. He said

the docks ... the one that runs along the length of the entire Marina, looks like it is in jeopardy of going also. He said there are all types of electrical wires and other things that may be involved and are very costly. He said it is a devastating blow to the City. He said the City does have insurance. He said he can assure them that they will recover because that is what McKeesport does. He said it just couldn't have come at a worse time. He said not that there is ever a good time, but two weeks from now they probably would have been getting ready to put the docks in and getting ready for the boating season. He said if they are going to get the Marina up and running this year, they will have to move very quickly and probably have a late start for the boaters. He said it is a shame because this is not the first time. He said they will get through it and he is sure most people on Council may have heard this or may not have. He said excuse his attire this evening because he was out in the rain and everything else. He said he planned on putting on a suit and did not get a chance. He said the City will recover.

- Mayor Cherepko said the other thing he wanted to talk about is his assistant, Jennifer Vertullo. He said she has the new Facebook page for the City of McKeesport. He said it is at City of McKeesport – Mayor's Office and is up and running. He said look them up if they haven't already. He said if they have a chance to like it, like it. He said the purpose of this is to be ... and let him be very clear ... this is about getting information to the public. He said it is something they all try to work on. He said they have a web page but Facebook seems to be very common now and it is really truly being used for communications purposes. He said if your group or organization is holding an event, they can personal message Jennifer, who manages the site, and they will post that information on there. He said this is for all of the groups and all of the organizations, all of the recreation events as well as other City events. He said it will also come in handy when things, unfortunately because of Mother Nature in the

summer, get cancelled in the summer, such as a summer concert or movie night. He said this will be a way to communicate with people when there are changes in scheduled events in the City. He said it is something they have been trying to get together for quite some time. He said it is up and running now, so if they have a chance to join the group and like it, and all the other Facebook types of things you can do with it. He said he is very excited to officially announce that tonight. He said he is being brief and hopes that Mother Nature will be kind to them tonight. He said it has been a long winter with the ridiculously cold weather. He said he thinks it might have been one of the coldest Februarys on record here in McKeesport and the Pittsburgh area as well. He said hopefully they will get through the next couple of weeks and get into the Spring months. He said they have an Easter Egg Hunt coming up with the Recreation Board on Saturday, March 28. He said there will be many more events which will start soon, which many of the Council people are involved with and volunteer. He said many of the Council members volunteer, whether they are on the Rec Board or not. He said they do have an active Council. He said they are actively engaged with the community. He said he looks forward to seeing everyone in those warm months. He said he can assure them, he will never complain that it is too hot. He said that completes his report.

- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said she has a question. She did the Mayor ever follow up with the Fire Chief about the oxygen.
- Mayor Cherepko said yes. He said he actually did that last night. He said he apologizes. He said he spoke with the Chief on the phone. He said as he thought about it, they are not required, but most people do report it to the Fire Department. He said if the Chief would like to speak on that regarding the residents who are on oxygen and how that helps the Fire Department if they are attacking a fire.

- Fire Chief Jeff List said what they have is a list that is established by address and occupant's names. He said then they identify it whether the person is on the first floor or second floor, so if they have an incident that residents may be at risk and there is a hazard of oxygen involved.
- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said they are not required to notify the Fire Department.
- Chief List said it is not required but they would really appreciate it if they would let them know, because it helps them out.
- Mayor Cherepko said the City does have a number of people that have notified the Department. He said it seems like a lot of people know it for their own safety, so they take it upon themselves to report it. He said that is something they could put on the web page or even on the new Facebook page as a friendly reminder. He said he thinks that is something that the Police and Fire Departments should give little public safety reminders as well on the Facebook page as they continue to utilize that. He said those are little things they can do. He said Ms. Walker-Montgomery brought that up last night and he agrees it is something can benefit all parties involved, not just the individuals on oxygen, but also the men and women in the Police and Fire Department when they arrive on scene of a structure that is on fire.
- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said to update the audience, she brought up last night whether it is required for a person who has oxygen in their house to report it to the Fire Department. She said she did not know if it was a requirement or not. She said is that something they want to make a requirement? She said are they just going to give them an option or should it be a requirement?

- Mayor Cherepko said what they would like to do, they will have to see if they can legally do it or come up with a way to register the oxygen use. He said they will investigate that and talk to Chief List to look at it and see what other communities are doing. He said he would like to make it a requirement. He said not that there would necessarily be a penalty, but just that it is a requirement. He said they will investigate this rather than reinventing the wheel and see what other communities are doing and if they have any kind of language on their books or ordinances. He said then maybe they can come up with something. He said unless Council disagrees, if they can come up with something that is not too burdensome on the residents. He said it could be as simple as a phone call ... in writing would even be better but even if it as minimal as a phone call with where they live, then it can be documented by the Department.
- Fire Chief List said it has to be basic information and nothing that would violate HIPAA or any of those privacy issues. He said just oxygen, which levels and their name is not even required.
- Mayor Cherepko said they will look into that. He said he will report on it next month.
- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said thank you.

CITIZENS IN THE AUDIENCE:

Mr. Dellapenna asked Mrs. Phelps, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Armstrong to come forward. He said please state your address and your business.

HELENE PHELPS, 3214 STEWART STREET, McKEESPORT, PA 15132.

DARMONICA ARMSTRONG, 1-E HARRISON VILLAGE,

McKEESPORT, PA 15132.
YASMINE BROWN, 2910 VERSAILLES AVENUE,
McKEESPORT, PA 15132.

Ms. Phelps said they will not speak long and will be brief. She said she wanted to let everyone know is that she is the Director of the Black Berets of McKeesport. She said a lot of people have been asking for the past couple of years when was she going to bring the Black Berets back. She said she has been taking care of her mother who has dementia, it has taken her a long time to think about this. She said after what she has seen in McKeesport and how the young people are all the trouble that is happening in McKeesport, she thought that the young people need something to do. She said in talking to some of the mothers, they decided to bring the Black Berets back. She said the response they got was overwhelming. She said they have about 100 children. She said they are trying to teach them positive attitudes and encourage them to attend school. She said there are so many things going on in McKeesport that they think these children need to be pointed in another direction. She said working together with them and working with the parents, they are doing very well. She said they got a lot of response from other people who are helping them. She said they are asking the City to stand by them because they are doing a good thing for the children and they are doing what they call Save Our City. She said through the efforts of the Black Berets that is what they are going to do, they are going to Save Our City and work with the young people any way they can. She said she hopes they will all work with them. She said what they are doing hopefully other surrounding areas will be encouraged to do the same. She said they have Channel 2, 4 and 11 may come out whenever something bad happens or someone is shot or whatever. She said they want them to come out and see that the City has a lot of good young people out here. She said they want the news sometimes to say, not that someone has been shot and killed, but look what McKeesport is doing with their young people and how great it is. She said she just wants to let them know that they are proud of

their young people and are going to do what they call Keep it Moving. She said thank you very much.

- Mayor Cherepko said if he may Ms. Phelps. He said something that he just thought of is that they have these bracelets here that have the McKeesport message ... Respect, Dignity, Love and Hope. He said he thinks they could incorporate that in their message with their young ladies. He said what the City will do is that they will get 125 to 150 bracelets sent to them, because he thinks it is not only something with kids but ... he doesn't think he is too big to wear one. He said he wears his with his suit. He said he even wore it one night when he had a tux on. He said he thinks it goes a long way. He said what they will do is that next time they have an event, he will personally come out and bring some bracelets. He said he thinks she could tie that in because what they are doing is exactly what the City is trying to do and he applauds her efforts and looks forward to working with her.
- Ms. Phelps said does anyone have any questions about the drill team.
- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said she has a question for the Mayor. She said the Black Berets contacted her a couple of months ago and she sent emails out to Council but one of the specific things they are looking for is the use of the Palisades. She said she talked to Dan about that and he told her to talk to the Mayor about it. She said they were looking to have a Talent Show or some kind of fund raiser at the Palisades.
- Mayor Cherepko said Ms. Phelps mentioned that to him and he will try to work something out. He said like they would with any of their groups. He said he doesn't want anyone to come here and think someone is getting special treatment. He said like they do with any group, he will try to work something out with them. He said they will do what they

can to work something out so they can make their event happen.

- Ms. Walker-Montgomery said she knows that was one of their needs to have a place to practice and that they are seeking donations for drums, to feed the kids at practice and transportation to get them back and forth to their events.
- Mayor Cherepko said as far as the drums ... which he was educated about, he doesn't know anything about the different drums. He said he thinks one was a snare drum and they made some phone calls from the Mayor's office and unfortunately they talked to Progressive Music and the School District. He said there was a snare drum and a bass drum. He said she was looking for two kinds of drums.
- Ms. Phelps said a quad.
- Mayor Cherepko said he told them he didn't know what he was talking about. He said they will see what they can do there. He said as far as practice time, the Palisades really is not something that they try to use for that because it costs much more to operate that facility, but they can always work something out and figure out something. He said if they need to use the Main Pavilion during the week, since it is not usually rented out then. He said they can work things out like that. He said they will sit down and talk and figure out something.
- Ms. Phelps said there is nothing they want to do right now but she wants to take them and do things for places like Community Life and visit Riverside. She said they need to see that. She said they need to see what ... they think that can never happen to them. She said no one knows what is going to happen in their life. She said those people don't be the way they are, her mother didn't want to have dementia, but a lot of people look at the older people and say they don't want to be that way. She said they want them to visit and do what they can do for Riverside and Kane and other

places. She said they are going to do outreach to help and perform them. She said they don't just want to sit back. She said they also want them to do because they need to know that.

- Mayor Cherepko said she is exactly right. He said if there is anything they can do to help on that end to try to coordinate things, even if it is part of a community project, to get them out and doing something. He said all too often the kids think of community service as a punishment and what she is trying to show them is that is not the case. He said they need to give back to the community. He said they need to see things at Community Life and the same thing goes with G-Tech doing some different projects on yards and a lot of other projects. He said it would be nice to tie them into things like that. He said it would give them the exposure too as well as the program itself.
- Ms. Brewster-Filotei said where are they meeting now.
- Ms. Phelps said they are meeting at St. Pius on Saturdays. She said they are welcome to come up and watch them practice. They are there every Saturday at 2:00. She said they would love them to come up and talk to the parents and see what they are doing.
- Mayor Cherepko said they would like to have a good showing at the Christmas parade too. He said it is months away but they would like to see them there.
- Ms. Phelps said they will do that. She said are there any other questions.
- Mr. Barry said he thinks it is admirable what they are doing and they should be proud. He said it is great they are coming back.
- Ms. Phelps said thank you.

- Ms. Armstrong said she is a parent as well as one of the original Black Berets. She said she had two kids before she could get out. She said she feels that once the Black Berets left McKeesport, the City went down. She said there was nothing for the kids to do. She said either the girls got pregnant or the boys moved in and took over their house. She said when she put this out and asked Helene if she was sure, she said she didn't want any kids. She said when she put this out on Facebook, she got over 100 responses within seconds. She said it was unbelievable to see how many people wanted to participate in the Black Berets. She said when they came to practice, she could not believe it and even Helene was overwhelmed. She said they could not believe how many kids were there. She said the Black Berets never had more than 50 people and now they have over 125 kids ranging from ages 5 to 17. She said they got more older kids ... they were not expecting that at all. She said you cannot get teenagers to do something like this these days. She said they are trying to save our City. She said that is what the Black Berets is about is trying to save the City and get it back to where it was.
- Ms. Brown said is also an alumni of the Black Berets as well as a parent of a future Black Beret. She said she would like to see the City come together to help the future of this City. She said the Black Berets is not just about a drill team or marching in the parade. She said it is about a lot more. She said it teaches them a lot more, being a team, friendship, love and dignity. She said it ties in with the City's values. She said she just hopes the City's values and their values work together to help the youth get to a better place in this City because they are really out of control. She said they need to bring things back to when she was a kid. She said she hopes the City can help out.
- Mayor Cherepko said as they know, their slogan in the City is "Working Together for a Better McKeesport." He said it is not just a slogan, it is an invitation. He said just as they are sending an invitation to the City, the City is sending an

invitation to them. He said he can assure them they will see a lot of support. He said anything they can do on their end, they will help them out. He said he applauds their efforts and they are exactly right when they talk about the youth today. He said they need to impact their lives with as many positive lifetime experiences as possible so they can make the right choices in life. He said there is one thing they all have in common and that is that each and everyone of them have to make decisions every single day of their lives. He said the more people we have in our life to impact us and make those positive decisions, the much more likely they have for their youth to turn into productive citizens. He said they look forward to working together and thank you for coming.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION #2015-5 – BILL #84: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND FISCAL YEAR 2014 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAMS.

MOTION: Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Mr. Carr, "To adopt Bill #84."

COMMENTS:

Mayor Cherepko said it has been a few years now with the whole CDBG Budget and restructuring and making sure they are in full compliance. He said this is just shuffling some things and really housecleaning, cleaning up some line items and clarifying the budget so lines are actually what they say they are. He said the Community Development Director A.J. Tedesco has been working hard to get them in a great relationship with HUD. He said this administration has been committed. He said that is why just a few months ago they were let out of the VCA, a Voluntary

Compliance Agreement, that they were put under because they were not in compliance for so many years. He said this is just more housecleaning and cleaning up. He said he applauds Mr. Tedesco, who is sitting in the back, for his efforts. He said they talked about it in more detail last night.

RC-3 YEAS: SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY,
DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER-
MONTGOMERY..... 7

NAYS: NONE..... 0

AMEND THE AGENDA:

MOTION: Mr. Carr moved, seconded by Mr. Barry, "To amend the Agenda to add Bills #85 and #86."

RC-4 YEAS: SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY,
DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER-
MONTGOMERY..... 7

NAYS: NONE..... 0

RESOLUTION #2015-6 – BILL #85: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, EXPRESSING THE CITY’S UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT FOR ACTION HOUSING’S REQUEST FOR FINANCING FROM THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND AND THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW HOMES IN THE CITY’S CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT IN THE SEVENTH WARD.

MOTION: Mr. McCall moved, seconded by Ms. Walker-Montgomery, "To adopt Bill #85."

COMMENTS:

Ms. Walker-Montgomery said she would like to go on record to say what she said last night about any contracts that they give out in the City and making sure that the people hire McKeesport residents. She said if they are going to build in our City, they should be hiring our residents. She said moving forward, she doesn't know if they can put that in the contract or if that is something that they can get outcome specific numbers for regarding how many people they are hiring from the City and how many minorities they are hiring as well. She said moving forward they should pay closer attention to who they are giving contracts to, if they are minority or women business owners and who they are hiring. She said if they are going to be in McKeesport, then they should include their residents.

Mr. Dellapenna said he definitely would like to see City employees have a fair shot at it.

Mayor Cherepko said as he said last evening, it is something they all want to see. He said he thinks that what they all have to understand is that in many cases when they do projects like this, they are not hiring anybody. He said these are companies that already have their employees, their contractors and subcontractors. He said sometimes that prevents the City ... but if they can hire McKeesporters that is what they want to see. He said he will keep in mind to do what they can.

RC-5	YEAS:	SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER- MONTGOMERY.....	7
	NAYS:	NONE.....	0

RESOLUTION #2015-7 – BILL #86: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF McKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AWARDING THE CONTRACT FOR 2015 ARLE TRAFFIC SIGNAL UPGRADES TO TRAFFIC CONTROL AND ENGINEERING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$235,383.80.

MOTION: **Ms. Walker-Montgomery moved, seconded by Mr. Brewster-Filotei, "To adopt Bill #86."**

COMMENTS:

Mayor Cherepko said for the public's information, once again this is approval of grant money they received. He said once again he applauds Mr. Gergely and the Administration. He said Tom Rosso, the City Electrician, gets involved, especially with the Arle Grant Applications. He said this is another \$250,000 that they are pulling into the City to upgrade two of their intersections that have not been upgraded at this point. He said they had all of the new lights up on Lysle Boulevard and many on Walnut. He said this one will be on the other side of the Jerome Street Bridge going on the ramp to Lower Tenth Ward and going up the hill to Upper Tenth Ward. He said that whole intersection will be new lighting and also on 9th Street and Walnut where the Post Office is. He said that will be a new intersection there. He said he applauds the Administration, Matthew and Tom Rosso in their efforts in securing this grant money. He said it is not easy to secure these 100's of thousands of dollars in grants. He said they have been successful in the past and once again. He said this is a vote on the low bid and who the engineer recommends based on the bids that came in.

RC-6	YEAS:	SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER- MONTGOMERY.....	7
	NAYS:	NONE.....	0

CONTROLLER'S REPORT:

Mr. Walsh said the bills amount to \$17,679.81. He said they are in order and he is asking for Council's approval of the bills.

MOTION: **Mr. McCall moved, seconded by Mr. Soles, "To approve payment of the bills in the amount of \$17,679.81."**

RC-7 YEAS: SOLES, CARR, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, BARRY,
 DELLAPENNA, McCALL, WALKER-
 MONTGOMERY 7

 NAYS: NONE 0

ADJOURNMENT:

President of Council Richard Dellapenna adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council

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